

The Chaplain Family Life Center

Building 2606 Soldiers Plaza

545-1760

Confidential



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**Contact Us At
545-1760**



for info on:

- **Individual or Couple Counseling**
(completely confidential)
- **ONLINE Support Groups For Soldiers and Spouses**
(anonymous)
- **Face-to-Face Support Groups**
- **Unit Retreats** (see Unit Chaplain

Counseling Available . . .

Types of Counseling

- Individual
- Couple
- Family
- Group

Areas of Counseling

- Combat Stress
- Pre-Marital
- Marital
- Divorce
- Recovery
- Blended Family
- Communication
- Parenting
- Anger & Stress Management
- Spiritual
- PTSD

. . . The Chaplain Family Life Center is staffed by a team of trained chaplain counselors dedicated to helping you be all God created you to be. Professional services are offered in a caring, completely environment to all active duty and reserve soldiers, retirees, Department of Defense civilians, and family members regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, or religion.

A Note On Confidentiality . . .

All counseling at the Chaplain Family Life Center is absolutely confidential. What you say here, stays here. In fact, your mere presence at the Family Life Center is confidential — we will not release that information without your expressed approval. Remember, there is no safer place to get the help you want.

CHAPLAIN
FAMILY LIFE CENTER



"Help For Your Journey"

706 . 545 . 1760
Building 2606, Dixie Road
Fort Benning, GA 31905

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"Help For Your Journey"

How May We Help You?

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How May We Help You?

The Chaplain Family Life Center is all about help — getting *you* the help you need for *your* particular journey. Join the thousands of others that have taken advantage of our care and expertise in the following areas. We look forward to serving you . . .

seminars for you

♦ **Pre-Marital Seminar**

Mandatory for all couples desiring to be married on Fort Benning (and a great idea for everyone else!) this interactive seminar is held the first Friday of every month from 0930—1530. Topics include: what makes a marriage last, communication, in-laws, intimacy, and finances. Call us!

♦ **Marriage Enrichment Seminar**

Need a marriage tune-up? This practical workshop meets 0930—1530 the third Friday of every month. The focus is on cutting edge techniques to better communicate, resolve conflicts, solve problems, and match expectations while building a love that will last forever. Call to register!

♦ **Effective Parenting Seminar**

Want to get children to mind without losing yours? This special session for parents meets the second Friday of every month from 0930—1530. It will re-energize you through skills in disciplining, setting boundaries, and building self-esteem. Call to register!

support groups for you

♦ **Dealing With Deployment Support Group**

Is your mate deployed? Would you enjoy the supportive company of others in a similar circumstance? This weekly support group is formed

based on need and current events. To express an interest, please call.

♦ **Dealing With Coming Home Support Group (Soldier / Spouse)**

Having a challenging time feeling like yourself now that you are home or your mate has returned? We offer 2 distinct support groups: one for soldiers, one for spouses—each focusing on putting the pieces together after deployment and combat. Interested? Give us a call.

counseling for you

♦ **Individual Counseling**

See the reverse for just a few of the ways we can serve you at one of the Army's premier counseling facilities. If we can be of help in getting you from where you are to where you want to be, then please . . .

Call 545 . 1760



Marriage Enrichment Training for Contingency Operations

**Teaching military couples to
strengthen their marriages before,
during and after wartime separations**

**Chaplain (LTC) Chet Egert
Battle Command Training Program
Fort Leavenworth, KS**

***There is a time for war and a
time for peace.***

Ecclesiastes

***Good understanding wins favor,
but the way of the unfaithful is
hard.***

Proverbs

Starting place

- Wartime deployments create high-stress situations for couples which adversely impact the marital bond.
- Marriages can experience emotional closeness during wartime separations but certain basic commitments must be shared by a husband and wife.
- Healthy marriages take time to grow and can surmount the toughest obstacles.



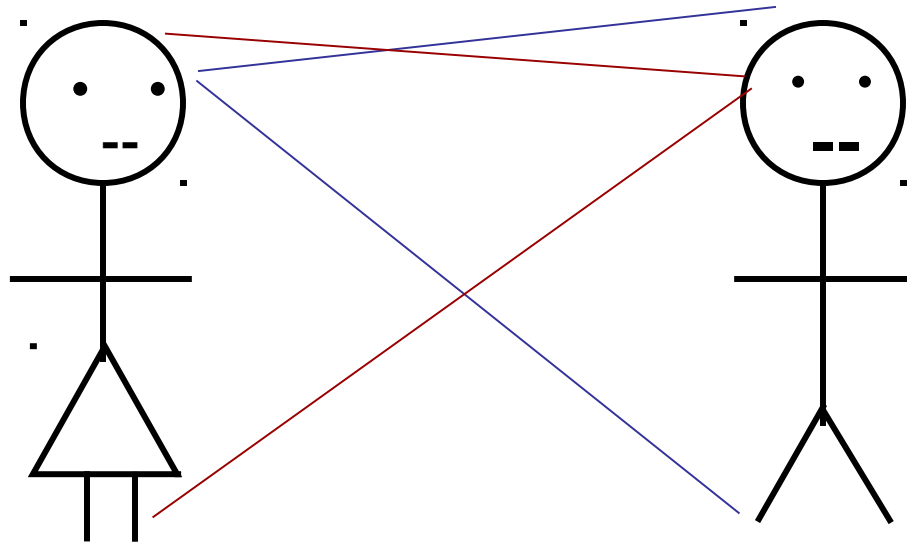
Divorce among Vietnam veterans

According to one survey of Vietnam veterans, 38 percent of married soldiers divorced their spouses within six months of returning from Southeast Asia. Non-marital relationships involving these veterans had the same trends toward instability.



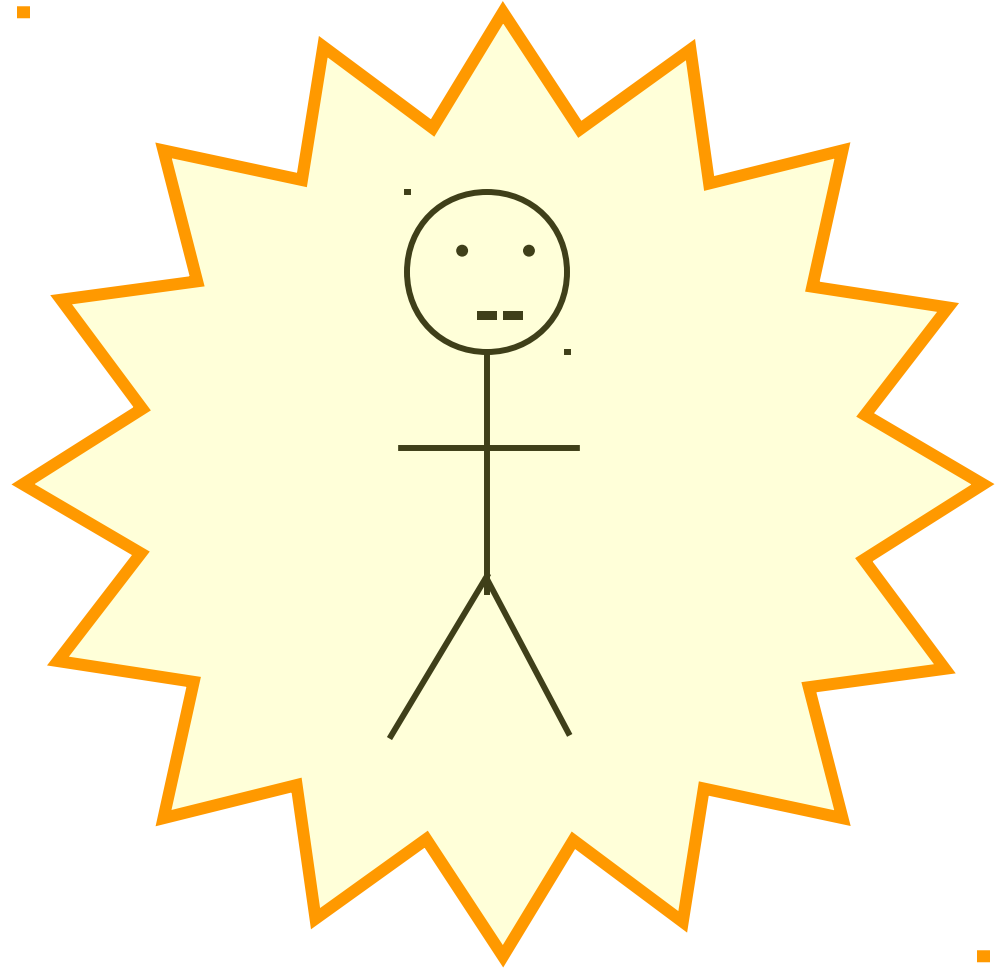
President's Commission on Mental Health, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders: A Handbook for Clinicians*, ed. Tom Williams, 185.

**In a perfect world a husband
and wife will focus equally
on each other**



**But in the real world dozens of factors distract the
husband and wife's attention.**

A combat deployment shifts the attention to the soldier



“You don’t know how hard I had it”

- The twelve month deployment doesn’t end at the reunion, it just enters another phase
- He’s changed, she’s changed
- Deployments are often a 52 week bout in personal pain, only to be followed by round two when the soldier comes home



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Where does an individual get the first four needs met?



Wartime Domestic Stress

Biological Family



Areas that require support: security, communication, belonging

In times of war the military family often replaces the biological family in satisfying these needs for



Separation Adjustments

- Separation adjustment
- Family adjustment
- Personal adjustment
- Army adjustment



Individual Resources

- Personal knowledge, skills, resources
- Family and marital structures
- Army support systems
- Financial assets
- Social support system
- Leader connections



Incidents that impact a marriage during a deployment

Family members

1. Lack of phone communication
2. Lack of email communication
3. Lack of regular postal mail
4. A spouse's lack of control over the soldier's safety
5. Parenting alone 24 / 7
6. Lack of support network for spouse at home
7. The spouse not knowing where the soldier is - fear of the unknown
8. Disciplinary problems with children at home
9. PCS to a new community within six months prior to a deployment
10. Pressure from extended family members to do things at home

23 respondents of different branches, ranks

UMT members

1. Death of family members while deployed
2. Death of soldier's military battle buddy
3. Death of fellow members of unit or other military friends
4. Personal loss of limb or eye sight by accident or combat
5. Non-lethal combat wounds or injuries to soldier but not loss of limb or eye sight
6. Killing the enemy
7. Working in a combat MOS where enemy contact is most likely
8. Performing back to back deployments
9. Redeployment date gets extended while soldier is downrange
10. Illness of spouse while soldier is deployed

14 respondents, chaplains and chaplain assistants

Incidents that impact a marriage during a deployment, Special Forces Battalion

Family members

1. Death of a soldier's military battle buddy
2. Death of a family member while deployed
3. Inadequate time to do things as a couple before soldier deploys
4. Personal loss of limb or eye sight by accident or combat
5. Working in a combat MOS where direct enemy contact is most likely
6. Illness of the children while soldier is deployed
7. Parenting alone 24 / 7
8. Not being able to come home for mid-tour R&R
9. Death of fellow members of unit or other military friends
10. Lack of phone communication

27 respondents

NCO, officers

1. Soldier misses children's birthdays and other milestones.
2. Parenting alone 24/7
3. Death of family members while deployed
4. Inadequate time to do things as a couple before soldier deploys
5. Being alone every day
6. Birth of our child while soldier is deployed
7. A spouse's lack of control over the soldier's safety
8. Illness of spouse while soldier is deployed
9. Performing back to back deployments
10. PCS to a new community within six months prior to a deployment

6 respondents

Post traumatic stress

The soldier in combat is trapped with this tragic Catch-22. If he overcomes his resistance to killing and kills an enemy soldier in close combat, he will be forever burdened with blood guilt, and if he elects not to kill, then the blood guilt of his fallen comrades and the shame of his profession, nation, and himself will be his. He is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't.

-- LTC D



Post Traumatic Stress Disorder has five dominate responses

- A hostile or mistrustful attitude toward the world
- Social withdrawal
- Feelings of emptiness or hopelessness
- A chronic feeling of being “on the edge,” as if constantly threatened
- Estrangement

World Health Organization's Classification of Mental and Behavioral Disorder

Examples of Disabling Stress

- Serious threat to one's life or physical integrity
- Serious threat or harm to one's children, spouse or other close relatives and friends
- Sudden destruction of one's home or community
- Seeing another person who has recently been, or is being, seriously injured or killed as the result of accident or



**These war-time experiences
produce stress in soldiers:**

Convoys

Operations

(patrols, S&S)

Mortars

Bombs (IEDs)

Attacks/Ambushes

Threats (snipers, crashes, killing)



Understanding combat

It is therefore reasonable to believe that the average and healthy individual—the man who can endure the mental and physical stresses of combat—still has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance towards killing a fellow man that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility. . . . At the vital point he becomes a conscientious objector.

--S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire*

Human response in combat engagements

Flight

Fight

Pre-battle activities,
presence patrols,
psyop activities

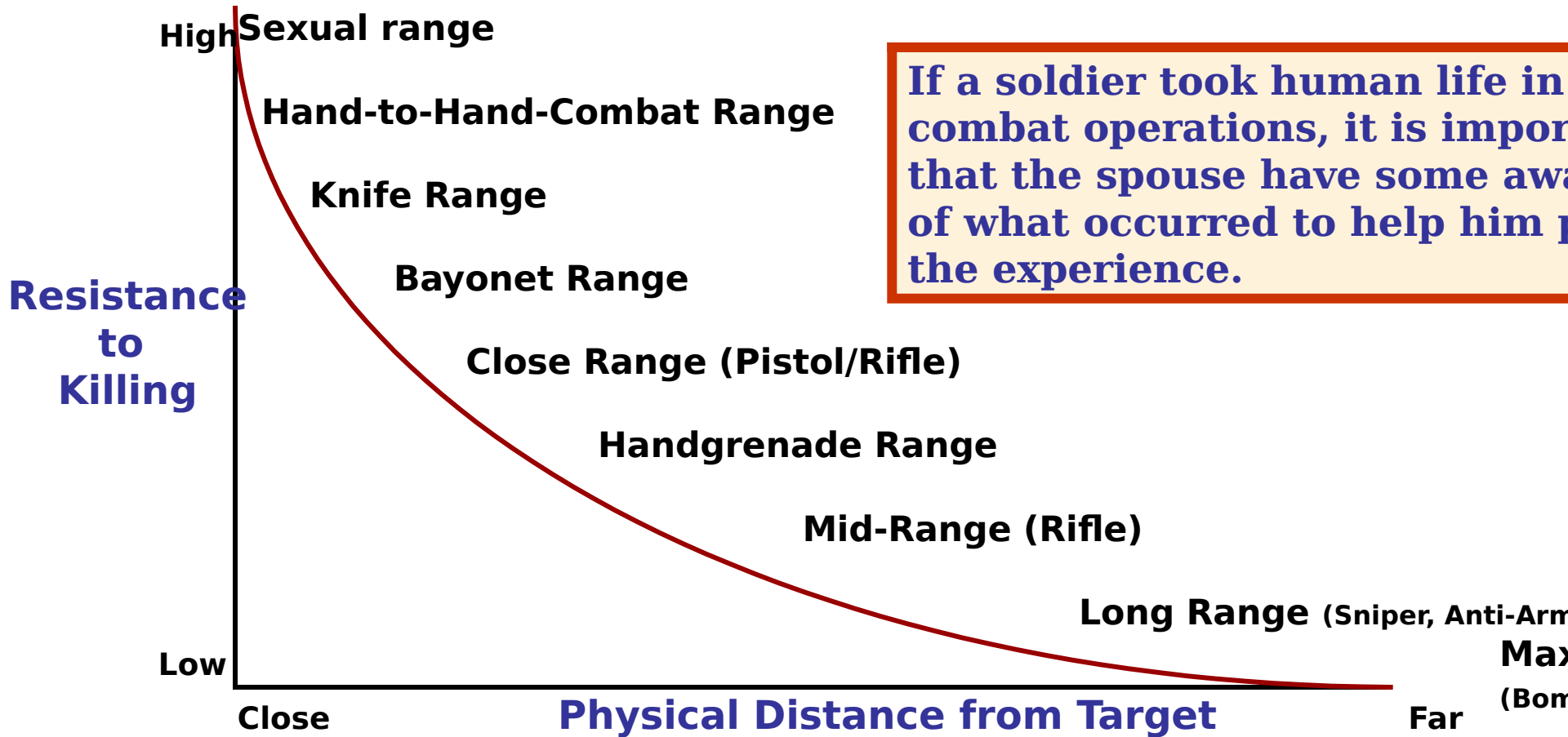
In many cases the
fighting is very short-
lived but the pre-fight
activities are very
stress-producing

Posture

Submit

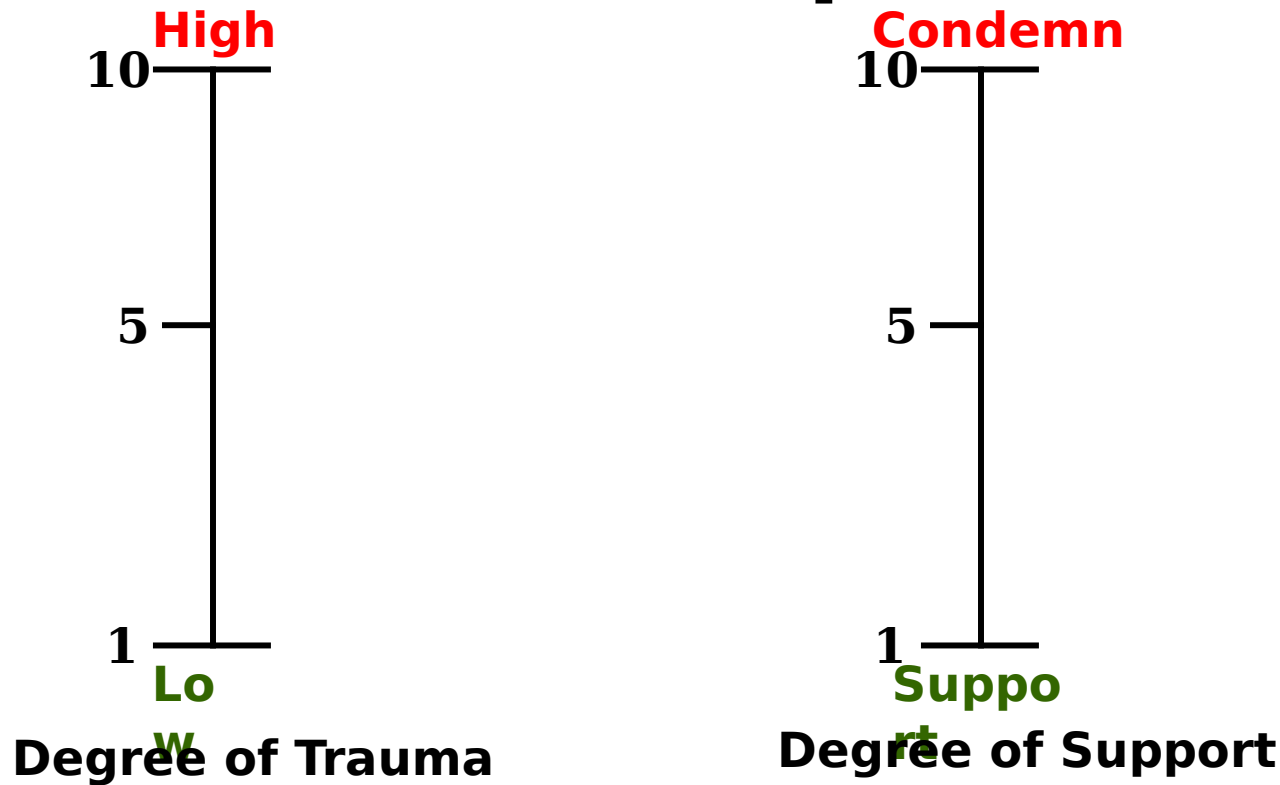


Facets of Killing



Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, *On Killing*, 98.

Relationship Between Degree of Trauma and Social Support in PTS Impact



To survive the changes of war a soldier will . . .

- Withdraw from communication in an attempt to spare his family the details or to block out the memories.
- Experience uncharacteristic mood swings which are triggered by flashbacks of the events. Days of silence usually lead to misunderstanding and confusion between the husband and wife.
- Alleviate the emotional pain by



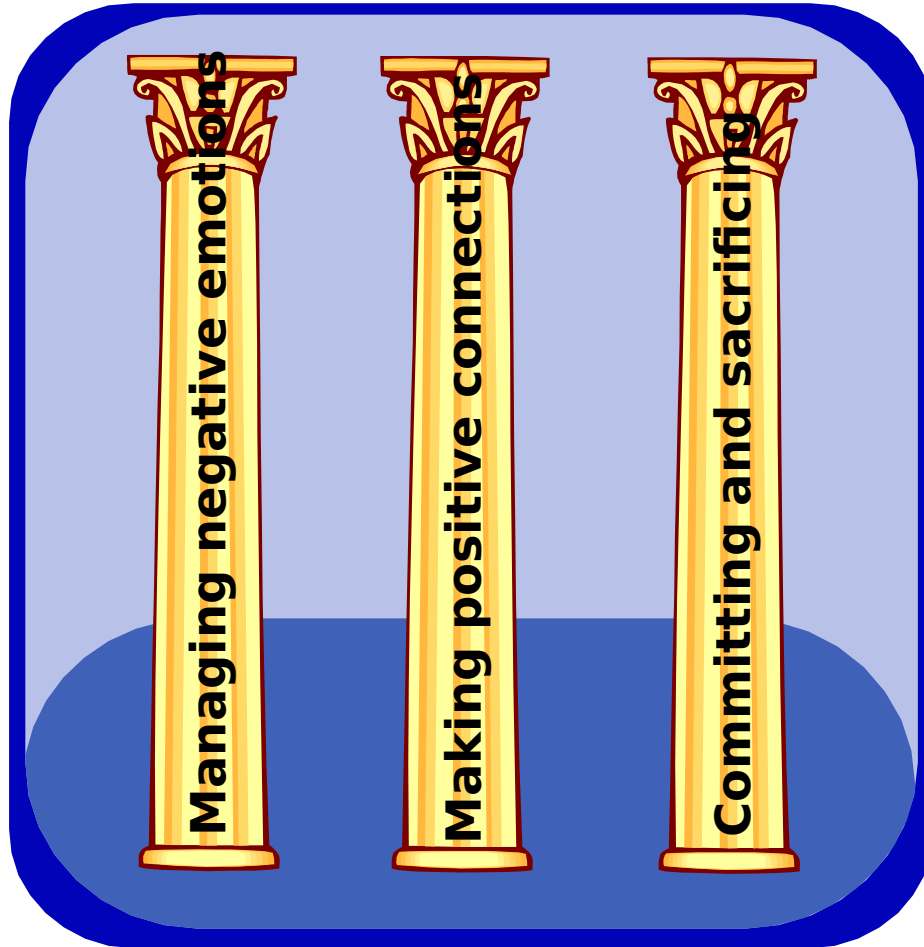
Two strongest passions which energize men and women to action:

- Sexual drive
- Anger



Dr. Les Parrott, Dr. Neil Clark Warren, *Love the Life You Live*, 121-131

Three behavioral pillars of marriage:



Helping your spouse overcome PTS

- **Absolution of guilt**

- Admit one's humanity—forgive yourself
- Seek forgiveness from those who were wronged
- Seek God's forgiveness

- **Anger management**

- Distribution of justice
- Constructive use of anger

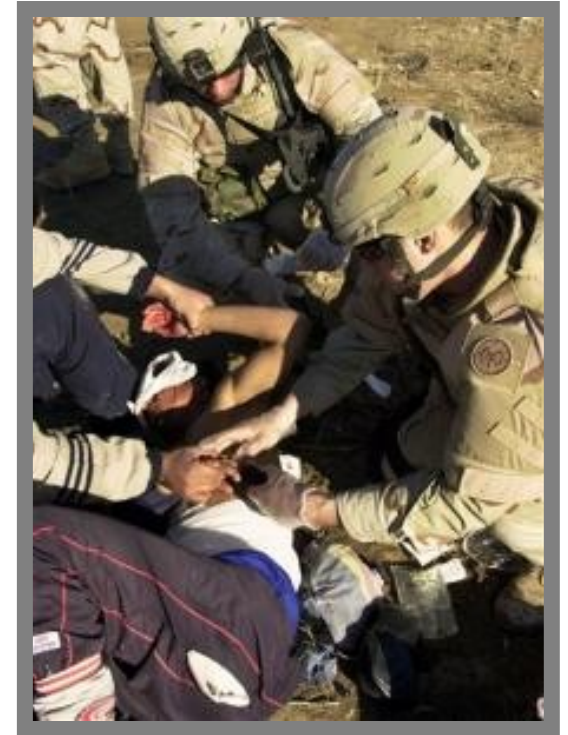
- **Service-work therapy**



*Behavioral pillars of the marriage

Helping your spouse overcome PTS (2)

- **Spiritual replacement**
 - Did God allow it?
 - What does God want me to do with it? What does God want to do with it?
 - Can I thank Him for it or at least give thanks in the aftermath?
 - Am I open to His presence?
- **Network with others***
- **Healing with time**



*Behavioral pillars of the marriage

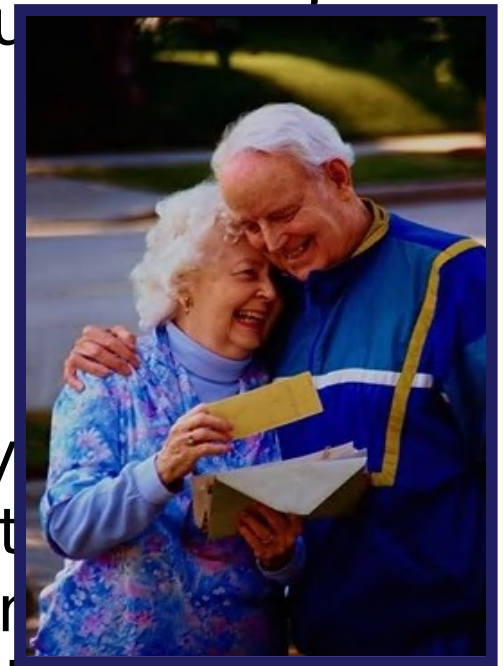
Filling the Gap

“In the first place, nothing can fill the gap when we are away from those we love, and it would be wrong to try to find anything. . . It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap; He does not fill it, but keeps it empty so that our communion with another may be kept alive, even at the cost of pain. . . In spite of all of the difficulties that times of separation bring, they can be a wonderful means of strengthening and deepening We must commend our loved ones wholly and unreservedly to God, and leave them in His hands, transforming our anxiety for them into prayers on their behalf.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Tegel Prison, Berlin, Christmas Eve, 1944

Where do we go from here?

1. Submit your spouse and marriage to God. Ask God for wisdom in dealing with the issues of intimacy and PTS.
2. Take the initiative in meeting your physical-emotional needs. Don't wait for him to do it.
3. Build intimacy on all nine levels.
4. Wives, ask your husbands gently but specifically about his combat experience. If you can't help him with issues of guilt, encourage him



5. Husbands, ask your wives what their needs are. Do NOT minimize her experiences just because they may not have been as exciting as yours.
6. Network, network, network with a core group for support.
7. Remember that many soldiers have had their morality stretched to the breaking point. Forgiveness is in order.
8. Learn as much as you can about PTS in order to understand your husband. Do NOT act like an expert.
9. Seek outside help from a trained, experienced counselor if you're not sure what to do next.
10. Have patience. Rejoice in small progress. Keep praying, believing and working for a strong, healthy marriage.

Questions



